

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the existing title with the following new title:

p1
A VIRTUAL COUPONING™ METHOD AND APPARATUS HAVING AN IN-STOREFOR-
USE WITH CONSUMER KIOSK AND BEING ABLE TO VERIFY IN REAL-TIME THAT A
PRODUCT IS ELIGIBLE FOR DISCOUNT REDEMPTION

Please replace the Abstract of the Disclosure at page 52 with the following rewritten paragraph:

p2
A method and apparatus for distributing, generating, and redeeming discount Virtual Coupons™, rebate or gift certificates or the like which may be used [on] in conjunction with a frequency card program ~~or the like~~. Virtual Coupons™ may be distributed electronically, for example, in the form of a diskette or CD-ROM software. ~~Software on the diskette or CD-ROM may prompt a consumer to call a 1-800 number for a validation number or code. During the phone call, telemarketing personnel may request consumer demographic and or identification information which may be entered into a centralized database.~~ Once the software is validated, a consumer may print out a list of selected Virtual Coupons™ displayed on a Graphical User Interface (GUI). When a product is purchased, the UPC code of the product may be compared electronically with a list of Virtual Coupons™ authorized for a particular consumer. An appropriate coupon discount may then be applied and the Virtual Coupon™ may be considered "redeemed". Once redeemed, consumer ID information and Virtual Coupon™ information may be retrieved electronically and used to update a central database. Accurate data may then be produced illustrating which consumers or groups of consumers are redeeming which Virtual Coupons™. Such data may be used for marketing purposes or to generate further diskettes for distribution targeting specific consumers or groups of consumers with specific classes of Virtual Coupon™ offerings. The use of Virtual Coupons™ eliminates or reduces fraud, and allows a frequency card discount to be applied only a limited number of times.